

Research on Transfer of Training

In 1987, Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers released the findings of their ground-breaking research regarding the extent of implementation resulting from various modes of training and follow-up support. This information has become the prime mover behind the increase in what is known now as instructional coaching. The following summary of Joyce and Showers' findings are dramatic!

	Knowledge	Skill	Transfer
Study of Theory	10%	5%	0%
Demonstrations	30%	20%	0%
Practice	60%	60%	5%
Peer Coaching	95%	95%	95%

CAUTION: Place this work on “coaching” within the context of the mentoring relationship, because just providing technical support (coaching) is NOT enough to make sure the employees actually implement in practice what they have learned in trainings. Joyce & Showers acknowledge that NO ONE will take the risks of growing in front of another person, (or their advice and “coaching”) unless they first have a relationship of mutual trust with that person. Mentoring provides that relationship within which effective coaching can lead to risk-taking and growth.

The Mentoring Bridge

The above research by Joyce and Showers (1987) shows that the water of implementation are shark-infested and not fertile areas for risk-taking, growth, or learning.

ONLY when coaching and mentoring are provided is it reasonable to expect that staff members be able to:

- adapt strategies learned in training;
- solve the problems of adoption and fitting new strategies to existing settings and other skills; and
- master new strategies.

Whether that training is in a classroom, lunchroom, collaboration team, e-learning on the web, these principles are at work and the results will be the same.

Except in the case of increasing awareness when no implementation is expected, the only time we should even provide training to begin with is when we will also provide the follow-up support people deserve to help them implement what the training has taught them.

Otherwise, why waste our time and resources to provide training we KNOW will never change practice? We shouldn't!